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General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

93rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 31 January 2002, 10.30 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Volcano eruption in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: Before turning to the items on our agenda for this morning, may I, on behalf of the members of the General Assembly, extend to the Government and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo our deepest sympathy for the tragic loss of lives and the extensive material damage resulting from the recent volcano eruption in that country. May I also express the hope that the international community will demonstrate its solidarity by responding promptly and generously to any request from the Democratic Republic of the Congo for assistance in its present plight.

Agenda item 125 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/56/780 and Add.1)

The President: I invite the attention of the General Assembly to documents A/56/780 and A/56/780/Add.1, containing two letters from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly. In document A/56/780 the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that 25 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

In document A/56/780/Add.1 the Secretary-General informs the General Assembly that since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/56/780 Armenia has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I remind delegations that under Article 19 of the Charter

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in documents A/56/780 and A/56/780/Add.1?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 12 (*continued*)

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Draft resolution (A/56/L.68/Rev.1)

The President: I call on the representative of Venezuela to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Ms. Pulido (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am honoured, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1, by which the Assembly would decide to convene a meeting of the General Assembly devoted to information and communication technologies for development. The Group of 77 attaches great importance to the convening such a meeting, because it will address issues of information and communication technologies from the perspective of development with a view to considering ways to close the digital divide and to promoting digital opportunities in the context of the globalization process in the emerging information society.

We view it also as an opportunity to discuss this item in order to make a contribution to the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in 2003 and 2005 respectively. Further, we believe that the meeting will make a contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held at Johannesburg in September 2002.

The draft resolution, initiated by the Group of 77, was considered by interested parties in the course of two rounds of informal consultations convened by His Excellency Ambassador Alexandru Niculescu, Permanent Representative of Romania. We thank him for his efforts in concluding the draft text which we are today submitting to the General Assembly for its consideration.

I wish to announce that the Republic of Korea has become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

Let me mention that the latest version of the draft resolution, contained in document A/56/L.68/Rev.1, now before the Assembly, includes an eighth preambular paragraph making reference to the extension of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics.

I thank all those who participated in the preparation of the draft resolution, and I express the hope that the text will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania): I wish to make a few comments on draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1, entitled "Meeting of the General Assembly devoted to information and communication technologies for development", which was just introduced so ably by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In my capacity as facilitator of the draft resolution, as designated by you, Mr. President, I held two rounds of open-ended informal consultations with Member States, on 22 and 24 January respectively. These produced the agreed revised text now before the Assembly. I express my sincere thanks to all representatives who participated in that process for the contributions they made in a spirit of partnership and constructive compromise.

I want to confirm the general understanding that the meeting of the General Assembly, consisting of three plenary meetings and, in parallel, separate informal panels, will be held within the span of two days.

I now join the call for the unanimous adoption of this very important draft resolution.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I would like to inform members that, under operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1, the General Assembly would decide to convene a meeting of the General Assembly consisting of three plenary meetings devoted to the issue of bridging the digital divide and promoting digital opportunities in the emerging information society during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly; and would also decide that, in parallel with the plenary meetings, separate informal panels would be organized that would include the participation of non-governmental organizations, academia and the business sector.

The meetings of the informal panels are not included in the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for year 2002 approved by General Assembly resolution 56/242, of 24 December 2001. The related additional conference servicing requirements under the regular budget, at full cost, are estimated at $13,100.

Should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1, the meetings of the informal panels would constitute an addition to the 2002 calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations. Any actual additional requirements arising from these new meetings would be reported to the Assembly in the context of the first performance report for the biennium 2002-2003.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1, entitled "Meeting of the General Assembly devoted to information and communication technologies for development".

I call on the representative of the United States of America on a point of order.

Ms. Serwer (United States): Throughout the discussions on this draft resolution, it was my delegation's understanding that there would be no additional costs and no programme budget implications attached to this draft resolution.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services): I think the understanding of the representative of the United States is correct. The stated amount could be absorbed within existing resources allocated to the Department.

The President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/56/L.68/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 56/258).

The President: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 12.

Agenda item 23 (*continued*)

Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal

Solemn appeal made by the President of the General Assembly on 25 January 2002 in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce (A/56/795)

The President: I will now read the solemn appeal.

"On 11 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution 56/75, in which it requested Member States to observe the Olympic Truce during the XIX Olympic Winter Games to be held in Salt Lake City, United States of America, from 8 to 24 February 2002, by ensuring the safe passage and participation of athletes at the Games.

"The Olympic Truce, the Greek tradition of ekecheiria, was born in the eighth century B.C., serving as a hallowed principle of the Olympic Games. In 1992, the International Olympic Committee renewed this tradition by calling upon all nations to observe the Olympic Truce.

"The General Assembly, recognizing the Olympic Truce as contributing to the international understanding and the maintenance of peace, adopted the landmark resolution 48/11, of 25 October 1993, in which the Assembly urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce. Furthermore, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted on 8 September 2000, includes the same appeal.

"The Olympic movement aspires to contribute to a peaceful future for humankind through the educational value of sport. It brings together the athletes of the world in the greatest international sports festival, the Olympic Games, and promotes world peace, friendship, solidarity and fairness, for which the United Nations also stands.

"Based on these shared goals, in 1998 the International Olympic Committee decided to fly the United Nations flag at all competition sites of the Olympic Games, and the United Nations system, in particular through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, is expanding its cooperation with the International Olympic Committee in various fields, such as development, humanitarian assistance, education and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"However, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 pose a grave challenge to humanity, the ideal of the United Nations and the spirit of the Olympic Games. The international community has shown strong unity and is cooperating closely to address the challenge. As the XIX Olympic Winter Games approach, even more concerted efforts and cooperation on the part of the world community are needed to ensure that the XIX Olympic Winter Games are safely and peacefully conducted.

"I, therefore, solemnly appeal to all States to demonstrate their commitment to the Olympic Truce and to take appropriate measures to ensure

the safe passage and participation of athletes at the Salt Lake City Winter Games." (*A/56/795*)

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to take note of the solemn appeal in connection with the observance of the Olympic Truce?

It was so decided.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 26 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children

Draft resolution (A/56/L.71)

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/56/L.71, entitled "Schedule for the plenary meetings and round tables of the special session of the General Assembly on children".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.71?

Draft resolution A/56/L.71 was adopted (resolution 56/259).

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 26.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda, allocation of the items and organization of work

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting on 19 September 2001, the General Assembly decided to allocate agenda item 110 to the Third Committee and that agenda item 110 remained open for consideration during the fifty-sixth session.

In order for the General Assembly to proceed expeditiously with the recommendations of the Economic and Social Council on this item, contained in documents A/56/L.69 and A/56/L.70, may I take it that the General Assembly wishes to consider agenda item 110 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: May I further take it that the Assembly agrees to proceed immediately to the consideration of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 110

Crime prevention and criminal justice

Draft resolutions (A/56/L.69 and A/56/L.70)

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/56/L.69 and A/56/L.70, recommended by the Economic and Social Council.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.69, entitled "Terms of reference for the negotiation of an international legal instrument against corruption".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.69?

Draft resolution A/56/L.69 was adopted (resolution 56/260).

The President: The Assembly will next take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.70, entitled "Plans of action for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.70?

Draft resolution A/56/L.70 was adopted (resolution 56/261).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 110?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.